

# INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

DATE DISTR. 2 May 51

NO. OF PAGES 14

NO. OF ENCLS.  
(LISTED BELOW)

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO. 25X1X

RETURN TO  
LIBRARY

Document No. 08  
 No Change in Class. ☒  
☐ Declassified  
 Class. Changed To: TS S C  
 Auth.: HR 78-2  
 Date: 04/05/78  
 PATR 82-004572-0074-15000-

CONFIDENTIAL/CONTROL - U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY

25X1A

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

- 2 -

and Prince Souphanavong established a Free Lao Government in Bangkok. At this time, Tao Neth joined the French and was responsible for the arrest and death of a number of Free Lao followers of Phya Khammao still living in Laos. The Free Lao Government in Bangkok eventually split into several factions. One group, including Phya Khammao, Prince Souvanapouma and Prince Sukand joined the French-supported Vientiane Government under Pui Banya. These men, more or less figureheads of the Lao Progressive Party, nevertheless occupied important positions in the Government, Souvanapouma in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Sukand as Deputy Director of the Lao police. It is generally believed that this group denounced Tao Neth to the French, because of his betrayal of Free Laos to the French at the end of the war.

#### Viet Minh-Supported Lao Government

6. The Viet Minh broadcast from Tonkin, announcing the formation of a joint Viet Minh-Lao United Front was heard in Laos. The Lao population is therefore generally aware of the formation of a cabinet under Prince Souphanavong.\*\* It appears possible that the Souphanavong government has effected an agreement with other anti-French Lao factions and that both the former Free Laos now in the Vientiane Government and Lao guerrilla leaders throughout Laos are in contact with Souphanavong.
7. Viet Minh-supported Lao leaders under Souphanavong include the following:

Tao Sri Tonk	Minister without Portfolio; commander of all Lao forces under Souphanavong.
Chao Sukon	Former secretary to Prince Petcharat in the Free Lao Government in Bangkok.
Chao Phuy	Lives in Ban Bung Khan (Saphur Chaiburi, 103-55, 18-25); maintains liaison between Souphanavong and the Viet Minh in North Viet Nam, via a communications route running from Ban Bung Khan to Paksane. The Viet Minh contact post in Central Viet Nam is a seven day walk from Paksane.*
Tao Sae	Lives in Nongkhai; commands a guerrilla unit active in the area between Vientiane and Paksane.
Tao Rod	Lives in Nongkhai; acts as a liaison officer between the Vientiane Government and Souphanavong. He is also concerned with Lao political refugees in Thailand. He was formerly a judge in Vientiane.
Tao Huenon	Commands a Lao guerrilla unit of 71 men working with the Viet Minh, which operates along the Mekong River in the Nam Sang (102-04, 18-12)-Nam Thon (102-13, 18-05) sector. At present he is conducting a raiding mission in the vicinity of Vientiane. Formerly a sergeant in the French Army, Tao Huen received a commission in Souphanavong's forces. His name holds considerable terror for travelers in the Vientiane area.

CONFIDENTIAL/CONTROL - U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY

CONFIDENTIAL/CONTROL - U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY 25X1A

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

- 3 -

Viet Minh Intentions towards Laos

6. Lao politicians generally believe that both the Bao Dai Government and the Ho Chi Minh Government are attempting to gain control of Laos. They believe that at the Pau Conference, Bao Dai suggested to the French that Laos be incorporated with Viet Nam in a Vietnamese Union. The Laos generally believe that the Viet Minh also intends to incorporate Laos as a part of Viet Nam. The Viet Minh forces the inhabitants of each newly occupied area in Laos to study Vietnamese. They have also attempted to impose Vietnamese customs on the Lao-Thai inhabitants of North Viet Nam. The French also have understood the desirability of making these areas nationally conscious and for that reason created the autonomous state of the Thai Federation.
9. Viet Minh propaganda in Laos is centered around the inability of the Laos to free themselves from French rule without Viet Minh support. Convinced by this reasoning, the anti-French Laos have inevitably succumbed to Viet Minh control. The majority of the Lao population, however, feels that after the conclusion of the war, the Vietnamese will control Laos.

Viet Minh Arms Procurement

10. Viet Minh troops in Laos are equipped with American arms smuggled from Thailand, similar to those used by the Free Thai during World War II. Only a small number have been produced in their own factories. Arms procurement committees have been formed by Viet Minh agents in Hongkai, Udon, Sakon Nakorn and Ubon. The arms acquired through these committees are divided equally among the various Lao guerrilla units. An important arms purchasing center is a medical and photo shop in the Hongkai market called "Viet Ung," owned by Tran Van Phuc\*\*\*, one of the arms committee members. Tran Van Phuc is a leading member of the Viet Minh in Hongkai.
11. According to an informant who has worked as a commission agent in Viet Minh arms transactions, arms for Lao guerrilla units are bought from Thai barracks and from Thai Army deserters who sell their weapons for cash return. On occasion, arms dealers have boasted that they are military officials who have influence and access to stores of arms.
12. The Viet Minh is able to acquire replacement parts for arms from Bangkok, where a number of Chinese shops have the necessary equipment. These Chinese deal principally in rifle barrels. The Viet Minh also has several arms factories in northeast Thailand. Several iron casting and smelting shops have already been discovered by the police in isolated villages.

Viet Minh Financial Support

13. According to a Viet Minh arms purchasing agent in Hongkai, the Vietnamese in northeast Thailand are supporting the Viet Minh organization to the extent of approximately 1,000,000 baht\*\*\*\* per month. Half of this sum is spent for the purchase of arms and the other half for general expenses.

Chinese Communist Arms Support

14. According to a Lao who formerly traveled through Yunnan and Indochina attempting to secure Chinese support for the forces of Prince Souphanavong, Ho Chi Minh will never receive sufficient arms from Communist China to carry out a successful offensive. The Chinese Communists intend to move their troops directly into Indochina as they did into Korea. CHU Chia-pi\*\*\*\*\*, a key man in the Chinese Communist Army concerned with the situation in Indochina, is opposed to giving unlimited arms support to Ho Chi Minh. It appears that he would like to lead his own army into Indochina.

CONFIDENTIAL/CONTROL - U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY

CONFIDENTIAL/CONTROL - U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY

25X1A

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

- 4 -

25X1X

15. Common gossip among Lao troops who have joined the Viet Minh forces in Laos is to the effect that if the United States supports the remnants of the 26 Chinese Nationalist Division on the Burma-Indochina border, the Chinese Communists will enter Indochina in support of Ho Chi Minh.

25X1A [REDACTED] Comment. This information was previously reported in [REDACTED] from the same source.

25X1A\* [REDACTED] Comment. Additional information on the positions of these individuals in the Sourphanavong government is contained in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

25X1A

25X1A\*\*\*

25X1A

25X1A\* [REDACTED] Comment. [REDACTED] from a different source, reports that Viet Minh headquarters in Nongkhai is in a drugstore owned by Nguyen Duc Phat. This possibly refers to the same shop. The Tran Van Phuc reported here is probably not the same as the military advisor to the Viet Minh delegation in Bangkok.

25X1A\*\*\*\*\* [REDACTED] Comment. A more accurate estimate is probably 500,000 baht.

25X1A\* [REDACTED] Comment. For further information on CHU Chia-pi, who participated in the disarming of Japanese troops in Indochina at the end of World War II, [REDACTED] contains biographical data on CHU.

25X1A

CONFIDENTIAL/CONTROL - U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY